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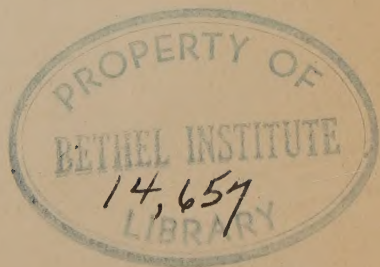
FR. BETTEX



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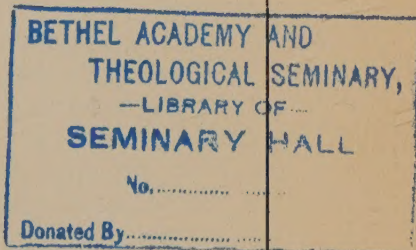


The First Page of the Bible

By the late Dr. F. BETTEX

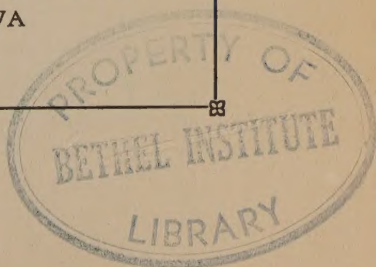
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The Beginning

"In the Beginning God Created the Heaven and the Earth."

AS the individual, so the human family is confronted by the twofold question: Whence do we come and whither do we go? But God, who has created the human heart and knows all its desires, has given us the answer in his Word. The first book of Moses, called Genesis, tells us whence we have come; the last book of the Bible, the Revelation of St. John, shows us whither we shall go. It is true, men who have considered themselves wise above that which is written have tried in every way to gainsay this divine answer; and a false reasoning at the present day proclaims from the house-tops that *science* has done away with the former belief concerning the origin of man, and that we are not created by God, but have descended from the monkey. But these so-called "scientific conclusions" are nothing but misty visions and unproved conjectures of men who rely on their own thoughts and of whom the saying is true: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

These self-styled scientists either openly acknowledge their inability to account for man's origin, or they frivolously say that he came by mere chance, as if absolute emptiness had of a

sudden concluded to become man. As to his destiny they are likewise ignorant, affirming that death is eternal night. Thus these worldly wise men themselves pronounce upon themselves judgment of "the outer darkness."

In this respect the traditions of the different nations on the earth show a surprising harmony with the Biblical account. Neither in northern Asia nor in Africa, do we find the belief—which for the heathen would be entirely natural—that man has gradually developed from the animal, but, on the contrary, the belief prevails that man was created good and happy in a beautiful land or garden, that through his own fault or temptation he fell, and that now he is found in a state of distress. Nor do scarcely any of the pagan religions teach that the earth is gradually developing itself into a blissful heaven, but, on the contrary, that previous to this there will be a final fearful catastrophe, a triumph over evil and a general judgment, which will be followed at last by a state of happiness and bliss. There are also found in those traditions of the nations remarkable accounts in perfect harmony with the Biblical view of the creation. Thus, for instance, we read in one of the oldest sacred books of the Hindoos: "He who existed from the beginning, created first the water by a movement of his spirit, on which account he is called, 'the one who moves upon the waters.'" (Genesis 1:2.) "He whose power is incomprehensible, when he had created the universe, exchanged activity for rest." Gen. 2:3.)

"The visible world, heaven and earth, were made in six periods. At first Ormazd (i. e., the god of good) created the light between heaven and earth, thereafter the water, which covered the whole earth; then the earth and the land came into existence. Further, there were created trees of all kinds; then animals came into existence; and last of all, the human being was created, good and with bright and uplifted countenance; but the fallen Ahriman brought great darkness into the kingdom of light and spoiled the whole creation."

Furthermore we find this harmony regarding the deluge in the traditions of nearly all nations. It is remarkable how people, living in widely separated parts of the earth, relate exactly the same things concerning a great flood which covered every mountain, a great ship, in which four (or eight) persons saved their lives, and many other circumstances of minor import. In our own land Europeans found an Indian tribe, who considered the wild pigeon a sacred bird that should not be killed. Being asked the reason, they answered that this was the bird which had brought a willow leaf into the ship to their fathers during the great flood. A willow-leaf greatly resembles the olive-leaf in form, size and color. Does this not point clearly to a common tradition and descent from Noah and his sons?

But considering the beginnings of the earth, how grand in all its simplicity is the first verse in the Bible: "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" Beyond this no human

thought has ventured, and never will venture in all eternity. True, hundreds of learned, unbelieving men have made efforts to attack this sentence, and to prove that there is no need of a God, and that the "eternal matter" had generated all being and life of itself. But is this reasonable? If dead matter had created its own life, and if its atom had found its own consciousness, the miracle would certainly be greater than that related in the Bible. The very things which the learned have discovered with reference to the beginnings of our earth tend to prove that what we call "life," as we find it in plants, in animals and in men, as distinguished from stones and metals, has not existed upon the earth from the beginning. Whence this sudden appearance of life? How could life come forth from dead matter? Not one of those gentlemen has been able to explain this. We, on the other hand, *know*, because God has revealed to us that He who is an almighty, living Being, out of the fullness of his infinite life has caused life to come forth upon this earth. Of course we readily admit that God is Himself an inexplicable wonder; nevertheless, we rejoice in knowing that He is an incomprehensible God, because a God whom we could understand would be no longer a God to us. Life from a living God—this is a reasonable thought; in this there is sense; but life from dead matter is unreasonable and absurd. From the infinite, accordingly, comes the finite; from the eternal, the temporal; from the invisible, the visible (cf. Heb. 11:3); from

the real and substantial, the transient and changeable. Now we understand why there exists in every finite being that mighty longing for the infinite, the striving on the part of every creature for what is above us and beyond us. This longing and striving is nothing else than what we call "life." Everything longs for its source. Do we not notice how everything in existence longs for the infinite, and is not God infinite? Indeed, he who is not spiritually blind will readily perceive from this mighty longing in his heart for light and fullness of life, for power and knowledge, that he has not had his origin in dead matter; else he would not long for life, but for death.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In this the very first line the Bible makes clear to us the position which we should occupy; and, as an able writer indicates in the beginning the main ideas which he wishes to bring before his readers, so likewise does God in his Word.

These introductory words tell us the subject to be discussed throughout the Bible, the things above us and the things beneath us, that which is heavenly and that which is earthly. These two ideas, "heaven and earth," form the center around which, so to speak, the whole Bible revolves. We are shown how these two were at first in perfect harmony and then estranged by sin; how God subsequently, in the course of thousands of years, made preparations for uniting them again; how in Jesus Christ they were again brought together;

and how—as the last page of the Bible proves—the whole earth will at last be at one with heaven, when the new Jerusalem shall have descended upon it, in order that God may be all and in all. And not only do we find this difference between the heavenly and the earthly in the Holy Scriptures, but also in nature itself. These are, as it were, the two elements upon which all life upon earth depends. Thus it is with man: his head, the seat of his thoughts, points upwards, while the other half of his body serves earthly, lower purposes. And does not the difference between man and beast likewise rest upon this “above and below?” Does not the entire man in his erect form point upwards, only touching the ground with his feet, while as the beast descends in the scale of creation, its head is carried nearer and nearer the ground. Do not the plants and the trees with their trunks and foliage point upwards, while the roots sink deep into the ground?

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”—like a granite rock this majestic sentence stands simple and great, in the beginning of the Bible and of known history. Thus far the Triune God was alone, dwelling in unapproachable light; but henceforth He becomes outwardly active in the creation and preservation of the world.

And now this foundation having been laid, the Scriptures speak more particularly of the earth, leaving us to acquire a knowledge of the heavenly glory after we possess it. In doing so, because it has to deal with the inhabitants of this

earth, it speaks to us in an earthly manner, humanly. It says, as we do, that the sun rises and sets, although, properly speaking, the sun does not "move," but the earth. Did not God in His Word descend in this way to earthly language and human way of looking at things, did He not speak in a manner human, yet absolutely true and divine, his language would be so elevated that not only the mind of the untutored, but also that of the most learned, the most renowned astronomers, would be unable to follow Him; and His Word would be altogether unintelligible.

The Earth

*“And the Earth was Without Form, and Void;
and Darkness was Upon the Face of the Deep;
and the Spirit of God Moved Upon the Face of
the Waters.”*

THERE is a remarkable agreement between these words of the Holy Scriptures and the results of careful investigations of nature. Leading astronomers and investigators consider it an established fact that the earth formerly was a red fiery ball, sailing about in space and enveloped by dense vapors. These vapors in the course of time, in consequence of the earth's cooling off became for the greater part water, but enough of them remained spread over the earth to cause impenetrable darkness. This corresponds exactly with the account of the second verse in the Bible. Concerning the account of the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters, the learned men have, of course, nothing to say. This Spirit of God, to be sure, is not to be discovered by the investigations or the calculations of the scientists. But what is this Spirit doing? Just as a hen, sitting upon an egg, containing dark and moist matter, hatching for a long time, while mysterious forces within the egg are doing their work in the smallest particles arranging themselves in a wonderful manner until life comes forth from the

inclosing shell; even so the Spirit of God moved upon the waters, and infused into matter the thousandfold powers in nature and the laws of nature which now have their play upon the earth. In Hebrew the verb "to move" has also the sense of "to brood," and "waters" is equivalent to "mighty, seething, rushing streams." In these mysterious forces and laws, which the creative Spirit of God in the beginning infused into that void and empty matter, are to be found all the phenomena which we observe here on earth; and even the human body is a wonderful workshop of unfathomable transactions, which take place in accordance with these forces and laws. For just as an artist or architect, who intends to produce something great, walks up and down meditating as to the shape and relation, size and form he will give each part of his work, and as the work now takes shape in his mind and stands before him complete, even before anything is visible to the eye, so the Spirit of God moved upon the waters and placed measure and weight, numbers and law into matter.

It is remarkable, however, how blind fallen man is, not only to that which is divine, but also to that which is natural and near to him. How many millions there are living upon this earth; she is the place of habitation; out of her they receive their sustenance; out of her they have been formed and to her they shall again return; yet how little interest do most of them manifest in this great creation of God! They follow their

business and their pleasure, and any sort of meaningless pastime, any kind of useless talk and worthless games is of more importance to them than the acquirement of knowledge concerning the great deeds and thoughts of God. They learn in the common schools that the earth resembles a great ball, that it revolves once in a year around the sun, and that it is 25,000 miles in circumference; but in how few do these facts arouse any deeper or higher thoughts! But a Christian ought also in this to strive after perfection, in order that, as far as his calling gives him time and opportunity, he may find enjoyment in meditating upon God's creation, in which he has been placed, "for God hath showed it unto them." "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. 1:20.)

And how enormously great is this dwelling place for man! Of a ball 25,000 miles in circumference neither you nor I can have any proper conception. But if one considers the great oceans that cover the earth's surface, oceans upon which ships may sail for weeks and months, day and night, without seeing anything else than the sky above and the water beneath; or the deserts with burning sand much vaster than the whole of Germany, where the camel, "the ship of the desert," can likewise travel for weeks without reaching the end; or the immense grassy plains upon which millions of animals roam about; or these great

stretches of country about the north and south poles, as large as entire Europe, covered with eternal snow and ice; and in addition to this those large countries inhabited by men; the mountain ranges and the glaciers, the mighty rivers which flow onward like broad lakes—I say, if you think about all this, and if you think further how this entire world soars through space having no foundation to rest on, you cannot resist the impression that this earth is a wonderful work, sustained by a master-hand.

But this earth not only *soars*, but it untiringly whirls in a prescribed orbit through space. You are aware that an express-train goes very fast; you are aware also that a cannon-ball goes much faster, so fast that it cannot be observed by the eye. But this ball upon which you live and in whose interior a mighty fire glows, from which we are separated by a thin solid crust; this earth with all its seas and countries, rivers and mountains, plains, glaciers and icebergs, flies through immeasurable space fifty times faster than a cannon ball, and carries you and all men by day and by night, whether they work or whether they rest, and so gentle and so regular is its flight that you do not notice it. And just imagine that it would be possible for you to take a position somewhere outside of this earth and see it pass by. What a sight that would be! At first you would see the earth in the distance appearing like a little star, but coming nearer it would grow larger and larger; soon it would resemble the moon; not long

after it would cover half the sky, and would, before your astonished gaze, whirl by with the greatest velocity; you would see in turn sunshine and dark clouds, the storm-tossed ocean and the level plains, high mountains covered with snow and dark forests, great cities and dreary deserts, —all this would in a few minutes pass by you in furious flight, and before you would recover from your surprise everything would be gone; you would see only a gigantic shining silvery ball in the sky, fast disappearing and soon looking again like a little star in the far depths of space, whirled onward by the breath of God. Then you would have seen only a small part of the glory of the Creator, the earth, which God made in the beginning; for thus hundreds of other earths and planets, many much larger than ours, fly incessantly through space, some surrounded by moons and some by immense rings which consist of solid or liquid matter. Is it not then better for man, in view of all this, to rejoice in such glorious works of God, and by meditating upon them to admire and worship Him with the feeling: what is man that thou art mindful of him?—and to have his mind centered on man and his small achievements, in the contemplation of which there is only unrest and self-conceit, while in beholding the works of God the soul finds peace and exaltation.

Thus many, many years ago the earth flew through space. Although yet without form and void, enveloped in darkness, it was even then for

the "sons of God" a grand sight, as it is written: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of earth? when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God sang for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors when I made the cloud the garment thereof and thick darkness a swaddling band for it." (Job. 38-4, 7, 8, 9)? And now this earth having changed its surface, hastens onward in its orbit with a population of 1,500 millions, with innumerable animals, countless birds which fly through the air, and millions and millions of fish that swim through the depths of the sea. This thought likewise ought to exalt our soul and make God great before our eyes, who watches over all these creatures. At this very moment, when you read this, God sees into your heart and knows all your thoughts; likewise the thoughts of those who, on the opposite side of the earth, lie in their sleep; likewise those of the wild Bushman in South Africa, who now with his poisoned arrow chases the antelope, or the Eskimo, who in his light skiff upon the stormy sea pursues the walrus. At this very moment, when He tries your heart and reins, He knows at the same time what everyone of those four hundred millions of Chinese thinks, and He knows the history of their lives better than they do themselves. At this moment, when you read this, he sees upon this fast-moving earth all the sick and the distressed, the beggars in their poverty and the kings in their splendor and power, the great number of those who perish in battle, the criminal who prowls

about in the darkness of night; He hears every word, song, prayer, curse, laugh, cry, every bitter complaint, every sigh which is directed to Him and every useless word spoken; He writes them all in His book for the day of judgment. Further: He sees the lion in the desert, the raven in the air, every little bird in its nest, every insect in the grass; there is not a little fish in the deep ocean whose path is hidden from Him, not a leaf on a tree upon the whole earth whose shape and size He does not know, not a leaf that would fall to the ground without His will. Yes, while He governs, cares for, feeds and rules this entire world, He beholds in every drop of water those thousands of invisible little creatures, scarcely visible through a microscope, and gives every one of them life and food; for in Him lives, moves and exists everything. Indeed, if you look at things in this way, then He becomes mighty and great, and you will acknowledge the power hidden in the word: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

The Light

“And God Said, Let There Be Light; and There Was Light.”

HAVE you never considered how great and magnificent, how wonderful is light, that garment of God (Ps. 104:21) who calls himself “the Father of lights,” and whose dwelling is in unapproachable light? What would the world be without light? How inconceivable, unknown, incomprehensible and joyless! How dark, aimless and powerless also all our thought!

But what is light? We cannot fully explain it, and are less able to comprehend it here upon earth than the rest of nature; for it is the first and highest work of God’s creation. But so much the human mind may know: light is a living power proceeding from God, which, while it surrounds the entire universe, keeps the smallest particles of bodies and matter constantly and powerfully in motion; the faster the motion, the clearer the light. A body altogether motionless would be altogether dark, and thus one can say truthfully: light is life, motion; and darkness is death. There is no complete darkness in the universe, and even a thousand feet deep in the earth, where our eye, blinded by daylight, thinks we see only darkest night, grows the crystal and many plants of inferior nature; and in the deepest val-

leys of the sea, where to our eye not the least ray of light penetrates, living creatures move, seizing their prey by their own feeble light. And when on a dark night man thinks the world lies in darkness, it is true only of a small portion of the earth, while the whole universe all around is filled by waves of light, which fly from star to star, from sun to sun. Whether the outer darkness of which Christ speaks will be absolute, or illumined by the red lightnings of the wrath of God, we know not. But the rays of light not only give the bodies form and shape, color and visibleness, but they possess still other characteristics; and since they are a creation of our Father in heaven, and since it is becoming for the children of the house to investigate and admire the works of their father, we will speak about them a little further.

Let the smallest ray of light pass through the eye of a needle, so small that you can scarcely see it with the naked eye, and you will have a world of wonders before you. Let, for instance, this small ray of light fall upon a drop of water through a good microscope, which strengthens the ray of light, what do you see in it? A whole world! There it moves and lives and stirs, powerful animals, almost frightful to look at, which move about quickly swallowing up the smaller creatures to right and left. Slowly, as in a dream, others move backward and forward in neatly striped little houses of mountain crystal, and still others constantly change their form, become suddenly oblong and round, stretch out their arms and

draw them back again, never resting, all live and move in God, know nothing of you and fulfill missions unknown to us. But the whole picture, sharply and accurately, tenderly and delicately drawn, with all its lines and forms, is painted by the one ray of light upon your eye, which, created for the light, is itself a wonderful work of God.

But now take up, with a great telescope, the light which comes from the moon, and what a difference! Formerly the moon appeared to you to be a small disk, and now? Upon a vast plain you see yonder great mountains, many thousands of feet high, mighty rocks stretching upward tower-like, bold, steep, broken, another world than the earth. Yonder in the moon there reigns eternal silence; there is neither air nor water. Never does the wind whistle through the trees, never a brook ripples, never a wave splashes, never do clouds move along the dark sky. All these things are shown to us by the ray of light coming down from the moon.

The ray of light also produces the colors; not only the seven primary colors of the rainbow, but also the thousandfold shadings which we discern. Moreover each of these different colors has its peculiar warmth, its different influence over earthly bodies. Under the influence of one ray a plant grows more rapidly, under another, more slowly; again under another light pictures are produced, such as you see in photography. Some have a quieting influence over man, as has been

demonstrated in the case of the insane; others produce excitement, as one may see even in the case of stupid animals, like the alligator, which becomes furious at red light. By a recent discovery it has become possible, by examining a ray of light, to determine from what body it proceeds. If, for instance, one holds against the smallest ray of light a prism, he will see a long, beautiful colored stripe, and in it there are drawn hundreds of small black and glittering colors and lines. These lines explain of what matter the body is composed from which the light proceeds, whether it be a candle, a petroleum-lamp, the sun or a distant fixed star. And thus the astronomer at the present day is enabled, by letting the smallest ray of light from a star which you can scarcely see twinkling in the heavens successively pass through a series of prisms, to read in it whether upon this star are to be found water, iron, gold, salt, etc.; further, whether the star is solid, liquid or gaseous; whether surrounded by a great stratum of air; or whether this star, which pursues its course through the universe faster than the wind, approaches the earth or recedes from it, and with what velocity. And how much may yet lie hidden in the writings of the light, some of which perhaps we may be enabled to discover, but most of which must be reserved for the life to come, in which it will be our employment to contemplate the wonders of God with clearer eyes than is possible here upon this earth!

How wonderful, too, is the effect of this light!

The light of the sun travels a distance of over ninety millions of miles from the sun to this earth, and yet is strong enough to make vegetation upon this earth grow and blossom and give man and animal strength, while creatures born in darkness, even where there is sufficient warmth, remain pale and weak.

But one thing more: Hundred years have not yet elapsed since a man in France by the name of Daguerre, at the instigation of his own family, was forbidden by the courts to make known his ideas, because he was determined not to rest until he had succeeded in taking the pictures which are found in the ray of light and making them visible upon a plate of glass. To people in those days this idea appeared absurd. Today every child knows that from every lighted object photographs, i. e., light-pictures, may be produced; that is, the light picture which proceeds from the object may be made visible. This proves that light-pictures from all objects, invisible to us, fly through space. Of course, the ray of light, though fast moving, needs yet a certain amount of time in order to go from one place to another; for instance, eight minutes from the sun to the earth, thirty years from the polar star to us. Let us consider the latter example. The light which proceeds from this star, with the picture of the star that is contained therein, started from that star thirty years ago, and tells us, therefore, how the star did shine thirty years ago, but not how it shines at present. Just as if you had received a

letter from an acquaintance in China who left there six months ago. You can see from the letter that at that time he was well and hearty, and that he was engaged in a certain line of business; but how he is at the present moment and what he is doing, you do not know; he may have taken sick since, or even died. Thus it is with the polar star. We do not really see the star itself, but only its picture as it started from the star thirty years ago. And if the star had been extinguished ten years ago, we would still see it shine, and would continue to see it for twenty years; and not until the expiration of this time would it disappear from view. Another star in the constellation of Pleiades (Job 9:9; Amos 5:8) is so far distant from us that its light needs five hundred years to reach us. Had it disappeared at the time of Luther's birth, we would still see it. From this we may judge that we do not see the stars as they *are*, but as they *were*; the sky does not show us the present, but the past.

But now imagine the case reversed, and some one at present looking down from that distant star upon the earth. If the light of that star consumes five hundred years in reaching our earth, the light from the earth to that star would need exactly the same amount of time; the inhabitant of that star would see the earth exactly as it was five hundred years ago; and if he had an accurate telescope or a very sharp eye, he could to-day observe very carefully what happened upon our earth during the month of August, 1426. Con-

sidering this matter further, you will see that the universe is filled with pictures of all events which continually take place, that it is a "book of light," containing "light-writings" or photographs of everything that takes place. Of course man cannot read these writings; whether there are beings upon many of these mighty luminaries which we see twinkling in the sky, who perhaps are able to read them with immortal eyes, we do not know. But it is certain that God does it himself, for He who made the eye, should He not see? And this may assist us in our understanding of how in God the past and the present are one and the same.

And all these wonders—and who knows how many others—are yet hidden to us in the ray of light—! have been brought about by the one word of creation, "Let there be light!" Indeed, a great, a wonderful God! And what an immense meaning that pure light has, of which our light is only a small part and a weak reflection, is witnessed on every page of the Word of God, which says: "God is light, and lives in an unapproachable light, and in Him there is no darkness." And us, His children, He calls to light, for in the light there is all knowledge, in darkness all ignorance; and, as the transient sun-light shows us every day in nature, in the light there is life, in darkness only death. But to us the promise is given that one day we shall dwell in the light where there is no darkness; yes, that we shall shine in our risen bodies like the sun in our Father's kingdom. What miracles of light will there float around us and

rise within us! What an incentive it should be for us here in this world, often so dark, to walk as the children of light!

Should it be asked: "How is this? Light already in the beginning, and the sun not created until the fourth day?" And, pray, why not? Light and the sun are not one and the same. Who has not read of the magnificent aurora borealis? So also comets shine by their own light; and astronomers know of gigantic stretches of light-giving nebulous matter in the heavens, hundreds of millions larger in size than our own earth, as, for example, the stars of Orion. There are now many extinct suns, and many others which are invisible to us, so that light without our own sun is clearly possible. And should God will, it is possible for Him to fill the whole universe with an atmosphere or "ether" of the brightest light.

When now we read further, "And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night," God clearly indicates what He wants us to understand by day and night, and what in the account of the creation "day" and "night" especially mean, not days and nights according to our reckoning of twelve hours' time—in the first days of creation there was as yet no sun—but alternating periods of light and darkness, without anything being said as to the duration of the same, as astronomers now note such periods in the changeable stars. We are here also reminded of the saying: "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;" like-

wise, the expression "day of the Lord," used to describe the periods of the final judgment, suggest that in Biblical language the word "day" has a far wider meaning than that given to it in just ordinary human speech. Speaking, therefore, of the days of creation, we have to understand, according to the wording and sense of the Scripture, epochs of light, as to the duration of which the Bible is silent, but which might have been thousands of years in extent. They were great epochs and mighty developments of light, followed again by seasons of darkness and cessation.

The Sky

“And God Said, ‘Let There Be a Firmament in the Midst of the Waters, and Let It Divide the Waters.’ And God Made the Firmament, and Divided the Waters Which Were Under the Firmament from the Waters Which Were Above the Firmament, and It Was So. And God Called the Firmament Heaven. And the Evening and the Morning Were the Second Day.”

WHAT kind of heaven is this, the creation of which is here related? Evidently not the one which is inhabited by God and the angels, and of which it is said: “Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee.” (The Hebrew word is “rakiah”—that which is stretched out, firmament. In French “etendue.”) But rather we have here an account of the creation of the atmosphere above the earth, which God also called heaven, and which, therefore, is called by this name in all the different languages of the earth, because it is to be a constant sign before the eyes of man, not only of the earth beneath him, but also of a clear, immeasurable world above him. In view of this, many a one is perhaps inclined to think that it is self-evident that something must be above us; or he may think, perhaps, that this so-called heaven is nothing else

but a little air, which does not deserve to be called a new creation of God. But the facts are different. Upon the moon, for instance, this "air heaven" is not found; and if we were there, we would not, even on a clear day, see above us a blue, airy sky, but only endless emptiness and profound darkness, out of which the sun and the stars would shine at the same time with unbearable, glaring light. That we have a blue sky above us, therefore, is not a matter of chance. Science, too, is in harmony with the Bible when it says: It is to be positively accepted that, after the earth had been for a long time surrounded by an extraordinarily high layer of thick smoke, through which no ray of light could penetrate, so that the surface was covered by complete darkness, finally, in consequence of the continued cooling off of these vapors, much heavy matter, which hitherto had filled the upper space, now fell to the earth; so that the air gradually became clearer, almost similar to ours; watery vapor could arise out of this and form into clouds. This atmosphere had to be there before animals and plants could exist, for the constituent parts of the atmosphere at that time became very favorable to the origin of the vegetable kingdom.

But what now is the use of this atmosphere, or "firmament," as the Bible calls it? we may ask. In the first place, it is to separate the waters above, that is, the clouds, from the waters below. Were it not there the mass of water which floats above us would, as a dense impenetrable fog, hover

over the face of the earth and the sea, and groping about in it we would gain a knowledge neither of the starry heavens nor the earth's surface. Indeed, our whole intellectual life would be destroyed. In this condition it would be ever moist and cold, so that the ripening of the grain and the fruit would be impossible. But you may think those few clouds above hardly worthy of being called "waters above" compared with the immense oceans. But in this you are mistaken; and were you to live in such countries, where during the greater part of the year incessant streams fall from above, you would get a different conception of the immense mass of water that is stored up in the sky. We can illustrate this in another way. From the rain and the snow which fall upon the earth come, as you know, the little brooks which, when united form the streams and rivers. Have you ever seen the Rhine near the city of Cologne? No doubt you thought it a mighty river. Still there are many streams upon the earth compared with which the Rhine is only a small brook. The Amazon river in South America, sixty miles above its mouth, is so broad that one cannot see from one shore to the other, and it appears as if it were the sea, while at places its depth is 600 feet. This gigantic mass of water, broad and deep as Lake Geneva, Switzerland, rolls incessantly toward the ocean, and enters it with such force that two hundred miles from the shore the mariner finds, to his astonishment, the sea containing an abundance of fresh water. Other streams in America, Asia and

Africa are almost as large. Now imagine, if you can, all these rivers united into one, and you will stand astonished before this immense mass of water which has emptied itself into the sea for thousands of years. Consider, too, that all this water had to come from the clouds, and that it would not be where it is had it not been sent down "from the waters which were above the firmament." And, again, these waters would not have descended from heaven if they had not previously ascended; masses of water like those contained in the mighty Mississippi and Amazon rivers ascend imperceptibly, day and night, to the sky. How is this done? Simply in this way: Under the influence of the rays of the sun there are formed on the surface of the water little bubbles, like soap-bubbles filled with air, but so small that they cannot be seen. This air, warmed by the sun, expands and becomes lighter than the air surrounding it, and the little bubble, like a balloon, rises upwards and forms the cloud, a single one of which contains a hundred thousand buckets of water. Thus God works great things by the simplest means. He might have placed at the "four corners of the earth" towering steam engines, which with a deafening noise and roar might have pumped the water out of the sea and sprinkled it over the earth; men would certainly have admired such a contrivance; but he accomplishes it noiselessly and in a much more perfect way by means of the air, so that every minute millions of buckets of water rise into the air, and the winds, also be-

longing to the air, sprinkle it over the earth; we, therefore, hardly take notice of it, and do not think much about it. A renowned astronomer has calculated that if the entire population of the earth, men, women and children, were to stand at the sea shore dipping with buckets, it would require 70,000 years of diligent work to take out as much water as the sun draws up in a single year without trouble. So little and insignificant is the power of man compared to the quiet workings of God.

And these waters from above, these clouds, are a peculiar world in themselves. Of course, one who lives in an inland town scarcely ever learns to know them in their grandeur and diversity; upon the great ocean, on the other hand, where they have their special birth-place, they form themselves voluntarily and rise towerlike in great masses. There the mariner can easily observe their different formations, of which there are four leading types: the cumulus cloud, which you may often see during the summer or before a thunder storm as it rises upon a dark background like a powerful snow-white dome; the stratus cloud, which covers the western sky in long streaks at sun-down; the cirrus cloud, which can be seen like torn up pieces of wool in innumerable shapes. It is found very high in the air; and balloonists, who were 25,000 feet high, have seen these clouds far above them. Finally the nimbus cloud with its irregular outlines. But he who wishes to learn the grandeur of the cloud-world

must go up in a balloon. Thus an English army officer, who undertook such a balloon ascension alone, relates how, while it was dark and rainy, he left the earth; soon, while passing through the rain-clouds, he was enveloped by vapor and fog, but in a short time he was above them; and now he describes enthusiastically how he passed through an ocean of snow-white flakes, and how also this was soon below him and all around him, like a Mont Blanc and a Himalaya, gigantic masses of clouds forming themselves in the deep, blue sky, quickly changing their shape, illumined by the sunlight. And in this new and grand world, he goes on to say, he scarcely dared to breathe or to move, for there was a peculiar, solemn and perfect stillness, and he felt as if he were alone with his God. And how will it be when He, whose coming we are awaiting, will appear with His angels and all the saints upon the clouds of heaven!

But this firmament created by God not only separates the waters above and below, but also serves other purposes. That we need the air for the purpose of breathing, we know; but still more: by it we are enabled to see. Did not the air reflect the rays of the sun, so that objects were illuminated from all sides, we would, as is the case on the moon, see of all objects only that part upon which the light falls, while the opposite side would be enveloped in profound darkness. It is the air which causes these endless variations of light and shade, and instead of producing a glaring light which would blind our eyes with a corresponding

darkness, it produces a mild, harmonious picture of the objects on the earth's surface.

Still another great and important service is rendered by this air-firmament or atmosphere: it is a warm cover, which protects the earth and all the creatures upon it from freezing to death. It is true, the rays of the sun are warm, even hot; but if there were no air they could only warm that side of an object upon which they fall, the opposite side, in the shade, being exposed to all the cold in the world, which is estimated to be a hundred degrees below zero. Thus it is upon the moon; and it would be so likewise upon the earth if it was not for the air; on one side we should roast, while on the other we should freeze, and thus no life would be possible. But the air moderates and checks these fiery rays of light, divides them, and while the atmosphere itself is warmed, it embraces us with its even warm layer of air.

These are some of the wonders of this great creation of God on the second day, and as does the light, so also the air praises His greatness and power. But we, who believe in this Almighty Creator as in a dear Father in Christ Jesus, say confidently:

Who 'points the clouds their course,
Whom winds and seas obey;
He shall direct thy wandering feet;
He shall prepare thy way.

The Solid Land and the Sea

“And God Said, ‘Let the Waters Under the Heaven Be Gathered Together Unto One Place, and Let the Dry Land Appear and It Was So. And God Called the Dry Land Earth; and the Gathering Together of the Waters Called He Seas; and God Saw That It Was Good.

WHAT do we learn from these verses? We learn that the surface of the earth was at one time level, and that it was evenly covered by water, and that at a later time the mountains arose and the bottom of the sea lowered itself. And what does natural science teach? It agrees with the teaching of the Bible by maintaining that the mountains were formed and the main-land arose from the depths after the earth had formerly been entirely covered by water. How did this happen? Natural scientists say: the earth was at one time a great, glowing ball consisting of fiery, liquid metal; one may see even to-day that the rocks and stones on the surface of the earth are nothing but corroded metals. Even the clay out of which we make our brick contains an enormous amount of a certain metal, which looks almost like silver, though much lighter. In the course of time when the earth gradually cooled off, there naturally appeared

upon its surface a crust. Gradually becoming thicker, it contracted and formed wrinkles, just like a scum on warm milk, when it becomes cold; and these wrinkles, corresponding in size to the earth, formed the first hills and mountains. Therefore the Bible does not say, "and God created the dry land," but, "let the dry land appear" (according to the Hebrew). The natural consequence of this was that the waters gathered themselves together at the deep places, whereupon on the one hand the sea and on the other the dry land appeared. Here also we have, with reference to an important point in the history of the creation of the earth, perfect agreement between the Bible and science. But all these things did not come to pass, as the atheists think, by themselves, but through God's creative word; and had He not spoken the words of that third day, the earth would still stand without form and void, and the mountains would not have appeared. The Word of God was the command that all powers which His Spirit, as it moved upon the waters, had placed into matter, should go on working according to His preconceived plan; and that the earth was thus to take a step further in its development. To be sure, the angels and the sons of God in heaven heard these creative words; but had we, at that time, as sinful men stood upon the earth, we would have heard just as little as when at the present day at the word and command of God a thunder-storm arises or an earthquake carries thousands away. The carnally

blind mind would also in those days have seen nothing in those creative movements but natural developments and workings of nature's powers, just as is the case at the present day with the learned and unlearned who know not God.

And, indeed, they are a great work of God, these "mountains of the Lord," as the Scriptures call them, because they make known in a special sense His might and glory. We can scarcely form a correct idea as to the greatness of a single hill or mountain, to say nothing of a mountain chain with its connections of millions and millions of cubic feet of earth, rock and stone. He who knows the Alps, and, after great exertions for many hours in climbing one of the giant mountain peaks, stands on the top beholding the earth beneath his feet, great forests appearing like little dark spots, rivers resembling silvery threads, may in some measure get an idea of what a mountain is. A well-known English writer, Charles Kingsley, said that the greatness and power of God first took possession of his mind when he resolved to have a little hill removed on his estate. For after workmen had been engaged carting away load after load of earth, and the little mole-hill would not disappear, he began to think how many mountain-ranges tower up to the sky, how the Alps, the Himalayas, or the Andes stretch a thousand miles along the sea-coast, and to see how little man is and how great are the works of God.

But what a spectacle it must have been when

the mountains first appeared! For not only did the earth's surface rise and fall like a sea, but it also burst and tore asunder, and out of the cracks thousands of volcanoes poured forth an immense mass of lava, that is, melted metal. Even at the present time many a mountain gives evidence of these activities. Undoubtedly, they have been formed out of melted stone, as well as those five hundred volcanoes still active and thousands of others that have become extinct. Think, for instance, of the long chain of the Andes with its numerous volcanoes. This mountain chain is nothing but the scar, so to speak, of a great rent, which at one time took place in the crust of the earth, out of which then, like the juice from the ripe fruit, the lava streamed forth, forming itself into mountains. It is therefore not merely a poetical way of speaking when we read, "The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord." (Ps. 97:5). This formation of mountains has, even at the present time, by no means reached its end; though in less majestic manner, mountains still rise and valleys sink down unto the place which He has formed for them (Ps. 104:8). Thus in the year 1707, in consequence of a subterranean fire in the Mediterranean sea, in close proximity to the island of Santorin, another island was formed, forty miles in length and rising forty feet above the sea. Thus numerous islands in the Pacific ocean are nothing but craters of old volcanoes that have slowly and gradually risen out of the ocean. In Mexico, on the 29th of Sep-

tember, 1743, at the time of a great earthquake, while the surface of the earth moved to and fro like the waving sea, one might have seen how, in one day, with a fearful noise a mountain arose, which covered four square miles and reached a height of 1,600 feet, while round about flames came out of the earth. This mountain, named Jorullo, stands to this day, and from its summit burning lava still flows. But, on the other hand, you could have read in the newspapers several years ago how mountains disappear. At that time an island near Java with a high mountain sank with a fearful roar, like an earthquake into the sea, while a rain of ashes darkened the sun for three days. Now if the appearance and disappearance of a relatively small mountain is accompanied with such grand and fearful phenomena; if it is possible for a single small volcano like Vesuvius to send its ashes over into Africa; and if another volcano, which we know, shakes the earth a hundred miles around and envelopes the country in darkness—what an indescribable and grand phenomenon must it have been when, on the third day, upon the word of God and His command, the entire solid land, with thousands of volcanoes, arose out of the depths, and when whole mountains and mountain ranges “skipped like rams!” In consequence of this gigantic struggle between fire and water how the earth must have been enveloped in thick smoke and flames, a type of that day on which it, with everything upon it, shall be consumed by fire. Yes, a beautiful and grand

creation are the mountains of God, and therefore the Psalmist never tires in praising their beauty and grandeur. And even God himself has sanctified their summits, which, covered with a mantle of eternal snow, rise boldly and loftily into the clear sky above the little and meaningless doings of human life. Upon a mountain Abraham was to sacrifice his son; upon a mountain, the majestic granite summit of Sinai, God descended as He gave to the people His laws; upon a mountain Moses was privileged to die and to be buried by God himself; upon a mountain Elias called together Israel and caused fire to fall down from heaven; upon a mountain Christ preached His first sermon, prayed when He was alone, was transfigured before His disciples and also ascended into heaven; and at His final coming His feet will stand upon Mount Olivet (Zech. 14:4). And what shall be the mountains of eternity in Paradise and upon the new earth—those hills to which David lifted up his eyes and from which he obtained help!

In sharp contrast with the hills, those luminous heights of the earth, are those dark mysterious depths of the waters which once covered the whole earth. That three-fourths of the earth's surface, which has been appointed as man's dwelling place, should be covered with vast wildernesses of water, is a great mystery; for it is certain that God could in many other ways provide a sufficiency of water. Quite enigmatical, too, is that world of living things in the great seas. "Yonder

is the sea, great and wide, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships; there is leviathan, whom Thou has formed to play therein" (Ps. 104:25, 16). And deeper still, in icy silence—for thither no noises reach; in eternal night—for thither no light penetrates, live for thousands of years myriad forms of beings, of which we know not and whose purpose we cannot even conjecture, and which know nothing of us nor of any part of earthly life. A great devouring dominion is the sea, flowing from pole to pole around the continents in ceaseless currents like immeasurable rivers. In the days of the flood it swallowed all the race, together with all vegetable and animal life, as completely as the Red Sea swallowed Pharaoh and his host, and as annually scores of ships and their crews go down to come up no more. What wonders of destruction, what treasures and riches, what skeletons of life may not be found in its store house of everlasting darkness!

As the hills symbolize the lifting up of the soul into joy and light, so is the sea a type of the heart in the depths of bitterness and strife, as Jonah says: "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the deep was round about me; the weeds were wrapped about my head" (Jonah 2:5). And thus must Christ, after He has been transfigured on Tabor, descend, on account of our sins, into the depths of death and hell. "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of Man be

three days and nights in the heart of the earth" (Matth. 12:40).

But in that day, when all things shall be revealed before the Great White Throne, then the sea will also "give up its dead." Then they will come forth, those millions drowned in the flood, Pharaoh and his host, as well as that innumerable multitude which since his day sank in its depths; they will come to the light with their bodies and with their sins to be judged.

But on that unspeakable blessed earth, made new by our Lord's revelation and power, "there will be no more sea" (Rev. 21:1). Everywhere the blessed will reign in bliss.

Vegetation

“And God Said: ‘Let the Earth Bring Forth Grass, the Herb Yielding Seed, and the Fruit Tree Yielding Fruit After His Kind, Whose Seed Is in Itself, Upon the Earth, and It Was So. And the Earth Brought Forth Grass and Herb Yielding Seed After His Kind, and the Tree Yielding Fruit, Whose Seed Was in Itself, After His Kind: and God Saw that It Was Good. And the Evening and the Morning Were the Third Day.’”

HOWEVER great the miracle in creating the light, the air and the earth were, here we have still something greater, namely, the appearance of life, the miracle of all miracles. Did you ever think what a wonderful thing a plant really is? Millions of lifeless particles of matter, taken from the earth, are forced by an unseen power to unite and form something that has life, that eats, drinks and breathes—for all this is characteristic of the plant—grows, becomes old, weak and finally dies.

Great and wonderful are these numerous creations of God. We are acquainted with about 100,000 different kinds of plants, each one of which has numerous varieties; but we are not, by far, acquainted with all the vegetable life, neither

of the desert nor the tops of the mountains, and still less do we know what grows at the bottom of the sea; neither do we know of the thousands of smaller plants, which move about in the muddy, slimy drops of water. What a contrast between the great and the small! There are thousands of little plants which you swallow unnoticed as you drink from a mossy mountain brook. On the other hand, there are those giants in the vegetable world which are hundreds of years old: the tall, slender palm, as it is found in the Cordilleras in South America, often 200 feet high, higher than most of our church towers; the enormous bread-tree in Western Africa, with a trunk 30 feet in diameter, on which a French traveler (Adamson) counted nearly 2,000 annual rings. This tree, therefore, must have begun to grow in the days of Christ. Then the gigantic Mammoth tree (*Wellingtonia*), of which there can be found in California from 300 to 400 specimens, with a round, smooth trunk as high as the tower of the cathedral in Stuttgart, and having the same diameter. But the longest or tallest plant is the giant-sea-tang, which has its roots in the bottom of the Atlantic ocean and grows a thousand feet high, until it reaches the surface of the water and the light of the sun, and while its limbs rock upon the waves of the ocean, down deep in the sea it forms mighty forests, in which the greedy shark, the dolphin and a legion of other sea-animals make their home. Not less astonishing is the great difference in the soil and climate, in which

the plants flourish. In the hot sands of the Sahara, in a heat that will kill a man if he is not protected, the date-palm flourishes, watered by subterranean springs; for, as the Arab says, it must have its foot in the water, and its top in the fire. But near the north pole, where there is a prolonged night, lasting for months and where the cold reaches 50 degrees below zero, where wine and even whisky, which was brought thither, had to be chopped in pieces with an axe, where the ice gets as hard as steel, and steel becomes like glass, tiny little plants bid defiance to the long polar night and the fearful cold. And if, after a long night, the pale sun again makes its appearance, there grow and blossom modestly the tender moss and pretty little flowers in the cracks of the rocks in a soil only a few inches deep, and watered by melted snow. And here also we find the smallest tree on the earth, the polar-willow, only hand-high, the stem as thick as a lead-pencil. And the weather beaten seamen, whose calling has driven them to this lonely spot, like to tell how they enjoy the sight of this little plant which even amidst sternal snow and ice tells of the love of God.

But the greatest miracle of the plant is its seed: "Whose seed is in itself upon the earth." Indeed, a great miracle! The smallest seed, which you can hold between the points of your fingers, has the power in it to produce a perfect plant with roots, stems, leaves and blossoms "after its kind." This plant again brings forth the same seed as long as the earth stands. What this

means, let us show by a few examples. From one single grain of the poppy a plant may grow which produces 30,000 seeds. Let each grain again produce the same and you will have in the second generation 900,000,000 poppy plants. Yes, it has been calculated that if every grain would grow, within five years the earth would be covered with poppy plants. Professor Gaussen, of Geneva, has figured out that, if a grain of wheat as it is found in Syria, Palestine and Sicily, would each time produce a hundred grains that the grains coming forth from this single grain in the course of eight years would suffice to feed the entire population of the earth a whole year. Such is the power of growth and increase which God on the third day put into the seeds of plants. If one thinks what a moving power it requires to make these millions of the largest and smallest plants rise from the earth, what is all the moving power of our machines, whose accomplishments are so much admired, in comparison to this? Therefore, if perchance a summer breeze blows a little winged seed on your sleeve, look upon it reverently: there is hidden in it a power of God before which every power of man dwindles to nothing. And if you divide a grain of wheat into parts, you find nothing in it but a little flour locked up in small transparent bags, which are called cells. The naturalists know exactly the materials of which a grain is composed, but can they themselves make a single grain? No. Even if they could obtain the exact material which is found in the grain and

could mix it in exactly the same ratio as it is in the grain, and would stir and shake the whole ever so much, it would not become a grain of wheat, nor even flour. And should they continue to expose this mixture ever so long to the heat and light of the sun, nothing would grow from it; it would not become a plant. Notice here the wonderful secret power of God, which is found in a little grain, and which leaves all human knowledge and capability far behind.

And this secret, tender little soul in a grain of wheat, which you cannot discover with a microscope, has apparently a remarkably tenacious life. For many months, even as long as fifty years, grains of wheat have lain as dead. During the same period of time millions of human beings were born into the world and died. In a shorter period the empires of Napoleon and Alexander were founded and passed away. But in the little grain of wheat the tender life was completely preserved; for when it was planted, there grew from it a new and strong plant, showing no signs of old age, but producing large and full ears. Yes, it is said that in certain graves of Celts, many hundreds years old, wheat was found. These people believed so firmly in the immortality of the soul that they lent without hesitation to one another on the written promise to repay principal and interest in the life beyond. (By the way, that is a little humiliating to Christians of today). Among these buried promises were found grains of wheat which, when planted, produced as good wheat as

seed of to-day.

And the purpose of vegetation? Why did God create the plant-world? Really every one knows why, but many pass it by without thought or thanksgiving. Vegetation, in its myriad forms, is here to nourish the countless living beings upon the earth, as though God had said: Thou shalt, quickened by the sun, prepare from rock and earth and water bread for my household. And, behold, unobserved and silently, by sun and by storm, plant and tree produce corn, oil and wine, delectable fruits, herbs and medicines, and all such things as are needed to sustain life. The many million yards of cotton, hemp and flax which are used in clothing are the product of the plant-world. Food and clothing for the hundreds of millions of living beings upon earth—this is the purpose of all this silent plant-life.

That primitive vegetable kingdom which God created on the third day has been preserved to us, though in a different form, up to the present time, and to it we owe our warm rooms during the winter. In the lowest and oldest strata of the earth there are found immense quantities of trees which, through some physical process, have been turned into coal; often there may still be seen the trunks, limbs, leaves and fruit; yea, by means of a microscope even the smallest wooden cells can be detected. This immense mass of vegetation, among which there is not to be found a single bone of a quadruped or of a man (a proof that these, as the Bible relates, were not yet created),

is our *coal*. It is well known that coal is found heaped up in different parts of the earth, often in layers forty feet in thickness. We may know how enormous these quantities are from the fact that in England alone sixty million tons are dug annually. It has been calculated that England alone would have enough coal for five hundred years to come. In North America, in China and in Australia, where coal has been burned already for two thousand years, there are yet stored up enormous quantities. And this immense amount of fuel which lies buried beneath mud, sand and layers of rock, is but the remains of that vegetation which God created on the third day, and which, by means of internal heat in the earth, has been slowly converted into coal.

The wind roared and whistled through these immense forests of gigantic trees, which at that time covered those portions of the earth that had scarcely arisen out of the water. But no animal roamed through these forests, no birds sang in the trees, and not even an ant or a catapiller crawled upon the limbs; everything was quiet upon the earth. Not even the sun shone upon them. Ignorant scoffers—for ignorance and mockery generally go together—have frequently laughed at the idea that vegetation, according to the Bible account, should have preceded the appearance of the sun, because it says that vegetation was created on the third and the sun on the fourth day, and every child knew that without sun-light no plant could grow. A cheap way of scoffing! As

if Moses had not known this. And how? Is it not possible that the earth may have had in those primitive times a different light from the light of the sun? Indeed, certain facts clearly indicate this. For instance, we discover in coal, whether it is dug in hot or cold regions of the earth, *exactly the same plants*, the gigantic fern as high as a tree and the palm-tree, which at the present day only grows in hot and moist countries. From this it is clear that at that time light and heat were distributed over the earth in an even measure, or, in other words, as is more definitely affirmed by the great botanist Descandolles, the vegetation which now has become fossilized, at that time had different light from our sun-light. We must therefore imagine the earth to have been enveloped in a mild light and at the same time heated from within.

Moreover the discovery of a manifold animal life in the ice-cold depths of the sea, whither no ray of light penetrates, proves that organized life can exist for thousands of years without sunlight and warmth. Thus, here also the latest discoveries of science confirm the Bible, and show how the Omnipotence of God far transcends the vain imagination of man.

If you hold a piece of coal in your hand, remember that you have a piece of a tree which at one time grew upon the earth, when neither sun nor moon shone, when there were neither earthly days, seasons nor years, when no animal lived upon the earth, and the soul of Adam rested yet

uncreated in the depths of the divinity. And when you have thus looked backward upon the thousands of years that are gone, take also a look forward. True, the earth and everything upon it will pass away; but there is promised to us a new earth upon which vegetation will gloriously grow and blossom, far beyond our expectation; where the trees of life will bear their fruit in their season, and when their leaves will serve for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:3).

Sun, Moon and Stars

“And God Said, ‘Let There Be Light in the Firmament of the Heaven to Divide the Day From the Night; and Let Them be for Signs, and for Seasons, and for Days and Years; and Let Them be for Lights in the Firmament of the Heaven to Give Light Upon the Earth, and It Was So. And God Made Two Great Lights; the Greater Light to Rule the Day, and the Lesser Light to Rule the Night; He Made the Stars Also. And God Set Them in the Firmament of the Heaven to Give Light Upon the Earth. And to Rule Over the Day and Over the Night, and to Divide the Light From the Darkness; and God Saw That It Was Good. And the Evening and the Morning were the Fourth Day.’”

WE just spoke of the vegetable kingdom and what remains of it in the form of coal, and as it existed before the sun shone upon the earth, and how there must have been at that time a different light from the one at the present day which enveloped the earth with an even temperature. Whence this light came can not now be explained, and in this case, too, like in hundreds of others, the best wisdom must find expression in the humble confession: “We

know not." But so much we do know, that, after a definite period of time, on the fourth day of creation, for the first time, two great lights appeared in the heavens, one of these ruled the day and the other the night, and these were to serve as regulators of time.

It is to be noted here that in the narrative of the creation of the sun and moon on the fourth day, the word "bara" (created) is not used, but "asah" (set in order). The native material of the sun was long before at hand, but not arranged, made into the sun, until the fourth day. Thus the German Astronomer Moldenhauer writes: "The earth required less time to form a globe than the sun, and long after the formation of the earth was the great mass of nebulous light formed into the sun-ball, small in the beginning, but dazzling in light." With this opinion, viz., that the formation of the earth preceded that of the sun by millions of years, the most renowned scientists and astronomers fully agree, e. g., Prof. Dr. Quenstedt, Astronomer Flammarion, Prof. Faye, and Lord Kelvin, the latter probably the most renowned physicist of the present time. Here also, then, scientific research confirms the Biblical narrative, and not, as scoffers assert, contradict it.

This is a very important mission, for our best clocks and other time-regulators would not be sufficiently accurate and reliable to show minutely the exact time for any given period; only the heavenly bodies are reliable time-regulators, which never gain nor lose, not even a minute or

second. Without them there would soon be a fearful confusion in the regulation of time; yes, without them and without the established division of day and night, month and years, man would never have entertained the idea of making divisions of time at all. But were we not to have divisions of time, an orderly human existence would be inconceivable. We see how the Scriptures, from the very beginning and during the time of the Law and the Prophets to the Revelation, pay much attention to time, even more than we usually notice. We refer only to the passages: "But when the fulness of time was come"; "My hour is not yet come." Also Rev. 12:14, 10:6, and many others.

Therefore, in order to have light and a division of time, we have the sun and the moon. But if one should conclude that this is their only purpose, it would remind one of a beggar to whom a king was daily giving alms, because the beggar might conclude that the king existed only for that purpose, and that this were his only mission. No, these are mighty creations of God, which do not exist merely for our sakes but also for His glory and honor, and to fulfill other missions unknown to us. Thus the sun gives light, not only to our little earth, but also to two hundred other planets, of which the majestic "Jupiter" with its four moons is 1,400 times as great, and the cloudy "Saturn," with eight moons, 700 times as great as our earth. And not only does the sun give light to these bodies, but it also forces them, by means of its mighty power of attraction as their

center, to revolve around it, drawing them irresistibly along in its flight through the immense starry heavens. Moreover, the fact that the Holy Scriptures speak from a human standpoint when they refer to the sun and moon as being the two main lights in the heavens, while the stars are mentioned only incidentally, is natural and proper. We know very well from reliable observations and calculations that the moon is a thousand times smaller than the fixed stars, which we see shining in the heavens, and that the moon, compared to the sun, being a million times larger, occupies a very subordinate and insignificant position in the solar system. But God has given His Word to the entire human race, which consists not only of a few thousands of learned and educated men, but of the toiling millions who eat their bread in the sweat of the brow, who understand nothing about astronomy and the natural sciences, but who are as near to the paternal heart of God as, if not nearer than, many a great philosopher. And if God wishes to speak to all these His children, He must speak to them in a very simple language, so that they may understand it. Consequently the accusation so often brought against the Bible of not speaking a scientific language, is exceedingly absurd. If the Bible were to speak "scientifically," what would it profit these millions?

Planets, suns and moons are the three main kinds of heavenly bodies in the universe. There is not one sun merely, but there are millions of

them, which may be seen through great telescopes. These suns are called fixed stars, and are just as large as, some even larger than, our sun and just as bright and even brighter. Why do they appear to us so small? Answer: because they are so far away from us. Our earth is not the only planet that revolves around the sun, but there are over two hundred other "earths," some greater, others smaller than our place of habitation, but like our earth having air and water, day and night and seasons, clouds and winds, dry land and oceans, mountains and valleys, some also ice and snow. Whether there are living beings, plants, animals and creatures of a higher order, we know not, and will very likely never find out while upon this earth. Our moon likewise is not the only moon in the heavens; those other earths and planets have their moons also, one two, another four, still others six and eight, so that the nights there must be wonderfully bright. And all these moons are, like ours, much smaller than the earths around which they revolve. Thus earths, moons, and suns are in reality the three main species of heavenly bodies created by God.

How it looks upon an earth, you know from experience. But let us see how it looks upon a moon. The surface of the moon is rigid, desolate and rocky, strewn over with high steep mountains, not interrupted by any ocean or sea, neither covered by forests. The height of these mountains has been measured with the instruments of astronomers; many are over 20,000 feet high, con-

sequently higher than the highest mountains of Europe. Over this broken, stony country, with grand bold outlines, the sun pours out a glaring light. Inasmuch as the moon has no air or atmosphere, just as God created it on the second day, the sky there does not appear to be blue, but perfectly black, and in this pitch black sky the sun shines unbearably bright, not only twelve hours, as with us, but incessantly fourteen long days, and pours over those naked rocks a glowing heat, in which metals would melt. Besides this the stars shine at noonday even brighter than upon our earth at night, because no layer of air cools and obstructs their rays. At the setting of the sun after this long "day," suddenly, without twilight, because of want of air, black night spreads over the valleys, whilst the summits, for some hours, are yet brightly beaming with light. Just then, if we were there, we would see in the east, instead of the setting sun, the earth rise most beautifully, appearing as bright as silver. From the moon the earth appears fifteen times larger than the moon appears to us from the earth. The continents, oceans, clouds, even the masses of ice at the pole, appear in bright and dark spots, as we observe such also upon the moon. There are no changes of the weather or of the seasons upon the moon. During all these centuries it wanders through space unchanged, rigid and lifeless. Whether it was inhabited at any time, covered with vegetation, or ever will be, we know not. According to all appearances, the precise conditions

exist upon the other moons; for instance, upon those of the planet Jupiter. The sun is altogether different. As the moon is the kingdom of death, the sun on the other hand is the kingdom of life; a life, a power, far beyond our comprehension. The sun is over a million times larger than our earth, and when it appears to us not larger than the moon it is because its distance is four hundred times greater. This gigantic world is a veritable ocean of fire, of glowing melted metal, surrounded by flaming air, thousands of miles high. The heat which exists there is incomprehensibly great and does not only measure thousands but hundreds of thousands of degrees, or how could, otherwise, the sun, at such a distance, give life to the entire surface of the earth and all its inhabitants? And if God were to throw our little earth into that fire, there would be only a small blaze, and the earth would disappear with everything upon it, just as if a little ball of wax would fall into our kitchen fire. By means of strong telescopes it can be noticed from our earth that mighty columns of fire burst forth from the interior of this immense ball. After some time these streams fall back again into that ocean of fire, and there, in the interior, form mighty whirlpools which appear like dark spots. These are the so-called "sun spots."

The stars, too, which you see so quietly shining in the heavens, are such suns, immense worlds of fire, many of them much greater, hotter and brighter than our sun. Thus, for instance, Sirius, the dog-star, the brightest in the heavens among

the well known constellation Canis Major, is considered to possess a force of light equal to 5,000 suns like ours. Just imagine such an abundance of light in our sky! Others again are less bright; still others are blue, green, or purple. How wonderful must such an illumination appear upon those earths, that revolve around these colored suns! Then there are the so-called changeable stars; these are suns whose light regularly decreases for weeks and months and then increases again and becomes brighter. Perhaps the reason for this is that one side of these stars is covered with dross; so whenever at their regular revolution that side is turned toward us, it appears dark. Sometimes there are two, three or four suns grouped together, constituting a "family of suns," and thus blue, green and golden suns fly around each other in a wonderful ever changing course. Upon those earths or planets the blue and golden days take turn-about with the green and the purple, and nights, too, are illuminated by vari-colored moons. Still more; sometimes there are several "families of suns" united into groups, and the astronomer beholds with astonishment such a colored group of suns in the heavens, guided by a great white sun, which serves, so to speak as a shepherd and leader. Who may fathom the wonder which God has created upon and in these worlds?

But also in this wonderful kingdom of light the earnest of Him is manifest, who is a consuming fire. The astronomers have observed thirteen

times already such exceptionally bright stars which having suddenly appeared, have after a few months or years gradually vanished. Certainly no one, not even the most pronounced infidel, can resist the impression: here I have been an eye-witness from a great distance how a world has perished in fire. There will come a time when the inhabitants of other heavenly bodies, if we dare speak of such, will see how a little star, or sun with our earth, will blaze up, and after a short time be lost in darkness (2 Peter, 3:10). Moreover, astronomers have noticed seven times already how in dark places in the heavens suddenly new light-spots, new stars, have appeared—no doubt new creations of God.

And thus we, too, look for a new earth after this earth, now shone upon by sun and moon, has disappeared. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory (Is. 60:19; Rev. 21:23).

Fish and Birds

“And God Said, Let the Waters Bring Forth Abundantly the Moving Creature That Hath Life, and Fowl That May Fly Above the Earth in the Open Firmament of Heaven. And God Created Great Whales, and Every Living Creature That Moveth, Which the Waters Brought Forth Abundantly, After Their Kind, and Every Winged Fowl After His Kind; and God Saw That It Was Good. And God Blessed Them, Saying, Be Fruitful and Multiply, and Fill the Waters in the Seas, and Let Fowl Multiply in the Earth. And the Evening and the Morning Were the Fifth Day.”

“**A**ND God said.” Thus the divine work of creation goes on. Hitherto the air and the sea and the land covered with unbounded forests had been desolate and quiet. And again there came another night of creation, and again there was darkness upon the earth and the sun lost its brightness. Again new mountain ranges came forth out of the earth amidst fearful crashes and noise, accompanied by thick columns of smoke, and those mighty forests which had been created on the fourth day were buried beneath sand, mud and rock, so that, according to God’s will, they should be preserved deep under the earth in order that men in the twentieth cen-

tury might bring them forth as fuel for the purpose of warming their houses and feed their machines, engines and steamers. But when the volcanoes ceased their roaring and the new mountains that had been formed of melted rock, had cooled off, when the smoke disappeared and the sun again shone forth bright and lovely on the *fifth day of creation*, then there came forth out of the ground an enormous abundance of vegetation. For the Word of God spoken once on the fourth day continued to retain its power in bringing forth vegetation, and will continue the same as long as the earth remains. But not only so. In consequence of the Divine Word, there began now to move for the first time in the air and in the seas a great variety of animal life; there came forth fishes and birds.

It has been a matter of surprise that two species of animals, apparently so different, are here in a manner grouped together and created on the same day. But in looking at the matter more closely, it will be seen that the fish and birds really go together and that both differ materially from the four-footed animals. Both have an egg shaped gradually tapering body, this being best adapted for their movement in the air and in the water. They do not walk, but move by means of fins and wings. In addition to this both have a fan-like tail which serves the purpose of a rudder, something not found with land animals. Further, both are covered with shingle-like scales or feathers lying one upon another. These give forth an

oily liquid to protect them against wet and cold. Both have hollow bones, very light and yet strong, filled with air instead of marrow, and both are oviparous or egg-laying. Neither are the so-called little blood corpuscles of these animals round, as is the case with the four-footed animals and man, but oval and much larger. Finally both species of animals have the same mysterious, regularly returning migration instinct. Like the migrating birds in the fall, the herring, the cod-fish and others in the depths of the sea, undertake their annual migration to regions unknown. In view of what has been said, one may justly affirm: the birds are the fish of the air in which they swim, and the fish, on the other hand, are the birds of the water in which they fly. Besides, it is known to everybody that there are numerous species of birds, the so-called divers, which can swim better upon and in the water than they can fly in the air; and again there are the so-called flying fish, which can sustain themselves for a time in the air. God has assigned to these, His creatures, a beautiful free life. It has become proverbial in many languages how pleasant the little fish finds it in the water and how free the bird is in the air. The eagle soars majestically for hours around the mountain summit, looking down upon the earth beneath him, as he sails with pleasure in the blue sky. At the south pole, where the oceans cover an area many times larger than Europe, the real king of the air is the strong man-of-war bird (Ornith). With much larger wings than the eagle,

it is to him life and pleasure to spend weeks, day and night, upon the ocean, hundreds of miles distant from the shore; to fight with the storm, which tosses the mastless ships to and fro, ever and anon crying to God in a hoarse voice that He might send him his prey and food in time. And in those same waters the much feared cachalot is king of the ocean. As large as, yea, even larger than, the whale, with a gigantic angular head and frightful teeth, he rises at times to the surface, plays with ships and knocks against them, so that the strongest rafters come apart, and the vessels with everything in them sink into the depths of the sea. Then again he dives into the ocean, and traverses with great force his watery kingdom, a ruler before whom the inhabitants of the deep fly affrighted in all directions, and even the voracious shark, this tiger of the sea, takes timidly to flight. Here we have also a "king by divine right!"

If we ask ourselves the question as to whether there are yet found in the interior of the earth remains of those creatures, which God created on the fifth day, we find again that the fact harmonizes completely with the Bible account. The layers of the earth relate to us very clearly that, after the immense creation of vegetation, whose remains we yet find in the coal, there followed great commotions of the earth, and that all at once an enormous multitude of water animals of all kinds appeared upon the earth, or more properly speaking, in the seas, whose remains by the millions constitute certain layers of the earth's crust; for

instance, the slate, whereof we have numerous examples. And if one sees how in a single piece of slate animals of all kinds, sometimes hundreds and thousands, are crushed together, one understands the word: "So is this great wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts" (Ps. 104:25). Also the "seamonsters," of which the Bible speaks in the original, we recognize very distinctly. Their remains are found in museums, although mostly in small specimens. They are called "Sauria" or lizards on account of their shape, but you must imagine giant animals from 20 to 70 feet in length. There were the mighty "fish-sauria," with their four enormous fins, and their sharp teeth found in their large pointed snouts, with which they could crush the ink-fish and other sea animals, whose remains we find in their stomachs to-day. The eyes of this sea-monster are especially interesting, for these, as one may see from the skeleton at the present day, were enclosed by many movable bone-plates, which made it possible for the eyes either to be pressed together to a small size or to be enlarged to the size of a plate. This, no doubt, served a twofold purpose; on the one hand, it prevented the eyes of the animal from being blinded on coming to the surface of the water, and, on the other hand, it gave it sight in the depths of the dark ocean in order to seize its prey. But there were also other sea-animals in great number, for instance, the sea-anemones, which, while grown fast to the bottom, carry their

beautiful heads like flowers upon long slender stems from 10 to 12 feet long. Then the well known ammonites, which are found in many places, the smallest ones like a dime-piece, the largest a hundred pounds in weight and as large as a wagon-wheel. Finally the ink-fish, which, on account of its horn-like snout, the country people call "thunder-wedge" or "devil's-finger."

But the inhabitants of the air, the birds, are also found for the first time in these layers of earth. The birds are not found in such abundance as the sea-animals; but we can see how even this fact harmonizes with the Bible, which uses the expression "creeping" with reference to the sea-animals, but not with reference to the birds. Besides this, the relative scarcity of bird-fossils is explained when we consider that the sea-animals, when they perished, remained in the mud by the thousands, and were preserved by being petrified, while the birds remained upon the earth and being exposed to the air would decay, so that their trace was lost. Yet there are also fossils of birds as created on the fifth day, similar to our birds at the present day, and also some which belonged to species that have disappeared.

Now let us hear something with reference to the increase of the sea-animals, in comparison with the inhabitants of the air, a point on which the Bible lays special emphasis in the twenty-second verse of the creation account. It is surprising how this blessing of God is yet manifest in regard to the water-animals. While the birds

show a relatively slow increase and lay only from one to six eggs, we find in the case of fishes a productive power which surpasses even the productiveness of the vegetable kingdoms already referred to. There have been found in a single herring 68,000 eggs, in carps from 200,000 to 342,000, in a huso (a fish in the river Wolga) above three millions, and in a cod from four to nine millions. Of course, of these eggs millions and millions perish from various causes; storms, water-birds, etc. But one who lives near the ocean may convince himself of the immense number of sea-animals, which are in the water. Thus, for instance, at the sea-port of Havre, thirty to forty fish-boats launch out into the ocean every day of the year and catch within a relatively small area an immense quantity of prawn, and small lobsters, which are eaten along the entire sea-coast, also in Rouen and Paris. And yet they do not decrease. Again, hundreds of large ships, with fishing-crews of from fifteen to twenty thousand, sail annually to the banks of Newfoundland, and catch on an average thirty millions of cod, and still this fish is always found there in the same quantities. The Norwegians alone, when the herring-migration from the north pole takes place along their coasts, catch in a few weeks three hundred millions and often a great many more, so that they make use of them as manure for their fields. Hordes of sharks and whales follow these columns and eat thousands of them, so that they become big and fat; and yet, in spite of all this destruction one cannot

notice the least decrease. An immense quantity of them find their way every year to the depths of the Atlantic ocean, where, no doubt, they serve as food for the larger fish. And again there comes from the north pole, year by year, this inexhaustible stream of a mighty life. It has been asserted that, if the means for catching and transporting them would be at hand, the entire human family could live on fish without a noticeable decrease. Thus the Word of God, spoken on the fifth day of creation, is still being fulfilled: "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life," and: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas."

Animals on the Dry Land

“And the Evening and the Morning Were the Fifth Day. And God Said, Let the Earth Bring Forth the Living Creature After His Kind, Cattle and Creeping Thing, and Beast of the Earth After His Kind, and it Was So. And God Made the Beast of the Earth After His Kind, and Cattle After Their Kind, and Everything That Creepeth Upon the Earth After His Kind; and God Saw That It Was Good.”

ONCE more the earth was covered with darkness and a mighty destructive commotion passed over it, and for a time the creative power of God rested. But when on the morning of the sixth day the light again poured over the earth, when innumerable new kinds of plants came forth; when all kinds of water-animals began to move in the oceans and innumerable birds to fly about in the air—then a new wonder was performed; *new, higher kinds of animals* began to inhabit the earth. To us, of course, the many kinds of animals which we daily see are no longer a wonder, as is the case with many other wonders of God! A horse is to us a horse, and a dog a dog, and nothing else. But should there appear for the first time some strange thinking being upon the earth, a being created by God,

to him, to be sure, man would appear the most wonderful. Man, the divine image, the fallen king, so small and yet so great, so changeable and yet eternal, so insignificant and yet so important. But next to man the greatest wonder to him would be the animal world, which God created on the sixth day. Such a visitor would ask: What are these beings that move about with such a variety of form and shape? Like you, they are born in pain; like you, they eat and drink, feel joy and sorrow. They seem to think and to be possessed of will-power. Like you, they have feeling and memory; they love and hate. They look up to you in silence, and yet they seem to speak. They willingly follow you; fear death, like you, and die, like you, in anguish and pain.

Indeed, there is something mysterious about these animals. We find them in the garden of Eden, where everything was pure and happy. God will require the blood of man at the hand of every beast, and the blood of beasts at the hand of man (Gen. 9:5). They have the capacity to see angels, where the eyes of men are holden (Numbers 22:23). They are even mentioned in connection with the invisible, heavenly world (II. Kings 6:17, 2:11; Rev. 19:11, 14). They are a part of the "creation" to which the Apostle refers when he speaks of the earnest expectation of the creation and its final delivery from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:19, etc.). And has God not made use of the animal world in order

that the people of the Old Testament covenant should know the distinction between clean and unclean, holy and unholy (Lev. 11)? True, we learn in the New Testament that every creature of God is good, but it is nevertheless remarkable, that even here Jesus is designated as the "Lamb of God," and that the Holy Ghost comes down in the form of a "dove," while on the other hand we read: "For without are dogs" (Rev. 22:15; cf. Matt. 7:6). Thus also in the New Testament the animal-world serves as a divine picture-book, in which the contrast between the holy and the unholy, the clean and the unclean, is presented to our view.

"Everything after its kind"—thus God created the animals on the sixth day. The Bible, therefore, knows nothing about "Darwinism," so called after its founder, Darwin. According to his theory the higher animals and even man, in the course of many millions of years, have developed from the lower animals, and these again in the same way, by means of an inherent power have come out of a "cell," i. e., a little bubble. No, as the plants, so also the animals were created entirely distinct from each other and complete as to their kind. True, since the day of creation many kinds of animals and plants have become extinct, but no one has been able to prove that new kinds have come into existence since the creation of man. Man has been able to produce only a number of varieties in the case of dogs, flowers and plants, but the species itself remains unchanged.

Since the world began no ox has changed into a horse, and the old idea that has again been brought forth in the last century, though in different form, according to which man is descended from a monkey-like animal which inhabits the interior of Africa (which, in an unconscious desire after perfection, has given up its animal appearance and appropriated to itself a language), is, not only from a Biblical, but also from a purely scientific standpoint, considered an unfounded fancy of would-be-wise men, which has thousands of facts against it.

As from the plants, which came forth on the third day, and from the fishes and birds, which came forth on the fifth day, so the layers in the interior of the earth contain from the four-footed animals, created on the sixth day, numberless, and, in fact, well preserved remnants, and the reader need only visit a museum to find them in abundance. And in order that the Bible also here may prove itself trustworthy, because it states that these animals were created on the sixth day, the remains of the same are not found in the older layers of the earth, which would indicate that they had been created at the same time with the plants and water-animals, but for the first time we find them in the later, the chalk-layers, which cover the older layers, but here they are found in great abundance. There are not found petrified skeletons of transition-formations, as if, according to the Darwinian theory, the water-animals had slowly and gradually changed into four-footed

animals, as, for example, crocodiles into oxen, but they appear all at once, hundreds and thousands of them, the ancestors of our elephants, rhinoceroses and hippopotamuses, the giants of those days, much greater and more powerful in their youthful strength than they are at present, with jaw-teeth as large as a fist, and front teeth as thick as the trunks of small trees, and from ten to twelve feet long, and a skeleton of bones put together like rafters, so that when looking at them one is reminded of that wonderful description of behemoth in the book of Job, Chap. 40:15-24.

There was, for instance, the "megatherium" or "great animal," nearly twice as high and long as a steer, with enormous thick bones, pillar-like legs and claws a foot long; it was covered with a hard skin, two inches thick, and had powerful chisel-like teeth, which enabled it to grind up trunks of trees like soft grass. This mighty creature of God walked slowly through the forests, and, shielded like a fortress, feared no attack. Through its skin neither claw nor tooth could penetrate, and neither the dash of a lion nor of a tiger would have caused it to tremble. With a single stroke of its paw it could have crushed any of the animals of prey existing at the present day. There was also the "Dinotherium" or "Fright-animal" (of which you may see a powerful skull with teeth in the museum at Stuttgart), which God created on the sixth day. It is shaped like a hippopotamus, but is much larger, having a strong snout with great teeth, which are bent downward

and with which it was able to hold itself in the current of a rushing stream. This animal, too, as far as we know, lived on herbs and water-plants. There were also at that time many "mammoths" and "mastodons," two species of great elephants. The last named was covered with a thick, shaggy fur, and had enormous teeth, and lived towards the north as far as Siberia, where, at the present time, numerous teeth of this animal are found, which constitute a large part of the ivory sold by merchants. Many such animals have been found frozen solid in the ice in the polar regions, which were driven there perhaps at the time of the great flood. They are so well preserved that dogs could live on their flesh, and even explorers did not despise eating the meat, which may have been thousands of years old. Besides the animals just mentioned, there roamed about through the forests during the time of the sixth day of creation enormous lizards seventy feet long, and taller than a steer; also animals from 14 to 24 feet long, covered with six-cornered or pointed scales as hard as steel. Some of these species are still found in South America, of course six times as small. In addition to these, there were numerous smaller species of animals, coming down even to the dragon fly and the spider, found at the present day nicely embalmed in amber, which itself is only the gradually hardened pitch of the pine tree of those days.

Thus the animals were created, which still inhabit the earth in endless variety. What shall

become of them upon the new earth we know not. But as they were allowed to walk under the trees of the first paradise, so they will also be allowed to walk under the trees of the second paradise, as the Scriptures clearly indicate. (*Cf.* Is. 11). The conservative spirit of the Scriptures does not allow us, on the one hand, to enter upon doubtful speculations and fantastic paintings, yet, on the other hand, we must not portray to ourselves the life to come as poor, barren and meagre. The heaven of our God is not a mere big hall, in which we are all to sit together, but a glorious world, yea, many worlds, which are all filled with His brightness and glory. Then it will be the entire universe. The millions of starry worlds, which we now see shining in the heavens, are only a small part of the great divine creation—a dominion, in which there is room for millions of creatures of all kinds, of which we have no conception and presentiment here upon our little earth.

The Human Body

“And God Said, Let Us Make Man in Our Image, After Our Likeness; and Let Them Have Dominion Over the Fish of the Sea, and Over the Fowl of the Air, and Over the Cattle, and Over All the Earth, and Over Every Creeping Thing that Creepeth Upon the Earth. So God Created Man in His Own Image, in the Image of God Created He Him; Male and Female Created He Them. And God Blessed Them, and God Said Unto Them, Be Fruitful and Multiply, and Replenish the Earth, and Subdue it; and Have Dominion Over the Fish of the Sea, and Over the Fowl of the Air, and Over Every Living Thing that Moveth Upon the Earth. And God Said, Behold, I Have Given You Every Herb Bearing Seed, Which is Upon the Face of All the Earth, and Every Tree Yielding Seed; to You it Shall be for Meat. And to Every Beast of the Earth, and to Every Fowl of the Air, and to Everything that Creepeth Upon the Earth, Wherein There is Life, I Have Given Every Green Herb for Meat: And It Was So.” (Gen. 1, 26-30).

THE earth was now completed, and there was glorious life everywhere and yet the creatures were looking for a visible ruler. Then God did not merely speak a creative word, but, as the Triune Being, held, so to speak, counsel

with himself, and this resulted in a great, eternal decree: "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*" How dignifying! A viceregent upon earth, God-like, his image, an absolute ruler over all creatures, a mediator between God and the creatures—that was what man was to be! And now what have Satan and sin made out of him? A poor slave of his lusts and desires, his body languishing under disease, bowed down to earth, perspiring and shedding tears, no longer controlling the entire creation, but living in constant fear. He fears the heat of the sun and the cold of the air; he fears the fire and the water and the animals of the field; he fears life and fears death, and his entire power and knowledge prove helpless against the grape-bug and the potato disease or against the invisible poisonous germs of the cholera, which give him fearful pain and deadly malady. How is the king of the earth fallen and his glory gone!

And yet you may behold traces of his dignity by looking at his bodily form. He does not walk horizontally, with his head toward the earth like the animals, but erect, his head upward, touching the earth only with his feet. And in his body he unites a diversity of qualities. While in the case of animals one is known by its swiftness, another by its strength, a third one by its fine hearing or keen sight, in no single one are these qualities found in such beautiful harmony as in man. The properly developed human body unites them all. History recites exhibitions of human strength,

which, if one considers the weight of the human body, surpass the strength of the horse and the ox, yea, even of the lion. The swiftest animals have already been outrun by man. The Arab of the desert distinguishes on the clear sky of the Sahara desert, at a distance of nine miles, a horse or a camel, where a European would see nothing but a dark spot. The Tunguse of Siberia sees with the naked eye the four moons of Jupiter. Furthermore, man is not covered with scales, feathers or hair, for these, though they protect the animal against cold, dull the sensibilities and lessen the sense of touch, but with a fine skin, which is very susceptible to the least impression. And what animal would be able, like man, to endure the 40 degrees of cold in Siberia as well as the 42 degrees of heat in Africa? What animal could live in the regions of eternal snow and ice as well as in the glowing sand, upon the summits of mountains, as well as three thousand feet deep in the earth, like the miners at Falun in Sweden?

And what a wonder is this body of his! The eye, which, according to its need, widens and contracts, adapts itself to the laws of the telescope looking into the distance, as well as to the microscope near by, is already in itself a wonderful world of fine nerves and muscles, which receive millions of rays of light and pictures, and give the soul reliable information concerning the things in the outer world. Likewise the human ear, in which there are found 43,000 wonderful small little staffs, like the strings of a harp, which

vibrate to every tune and noise and through which the soul receives the wonders of sound. But, above all, the greatest of wonders is speech. In order that these noble senses may perform their functions, it is necessary that there should be nourishing organs. The mouth, throat and stomach receive and rapidly convert suitable food into blood, so that the bread, which a few hours ago lay upon your table, has become now a part of yourself, has been changed into blood on which you subsist, and into brain with which you think. and the blood, this mysterious liquid, of which the Bible tells us that it contains the life of the soul, is now taken up by the heart, that wonderful center of life, and it pumps this life-juice incessantly by day and night, whether you think about it or not, through the finest arteries, up into the brain and down into the stomach, into the tips of your fingers and toes, and nourishes therewith the whole body. If this heart were merely a mechanical contrivance by man, made out of steel and diamond, it would have been worn out and unable to perform its function long ago. For it heats seventy times in a minute, in a day 100,800 times, and in a year 36,792,000 times. If you are fifty years old and a healthy man, your heart has beaten, without a pause, 1800 million times, and yet feels no weariness! So likewise the lungs breathe incessantly and untiringly the fresh air through thousands of cells, and suck it up as a sponge the water, and provide the blood with fresh air in order that it may be able to perform

its function. They also, by the process of breathing, remove the impure air that has become useless, and all this is done whether you think about it or not.

Besides these wonderful organs for nourishment, circulation of the blood and breathing, the body is interwoven by a fine net-work of white threads, all of which unite in the spinal marrow or brain. These are the nerves, the telegraph and telephone wires, by which the soul is informed of what is going on in the body, pain or enjoyment, warmth or cold. And all these different activities work harmoniously together. One cannot do without the others. The nerves and the brain need a constant supply of blood, and if this ceases only for a half minute, or a few drops of it are spilled, it will result in a paraletic stroke, and man will fall to the ground. Likewise the heart needs the assistance of the nerves for its activity, and must be nourished by the stomach. The same is true of the lungs and their functions. And all this is done, not in a manner like unto our machinery with much noise and bustle, but so easily and gently that you do not notice it yourself. It is the breath of God within you that moves all these wonderful forces and compels to united action what we call life. If you reflect upon all these things, you must cry out with David: "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14).

Moreover, in another respect our body must be considered a wonderful mechanism. We are

accustomed to look upon it as something solid and unchangeable, but we are mistaken. Our body is something in the highest degree *changeable*, something that is in a constant state of dissolution and reconstruction. That it constantly needs food in order to sustain itself, you know; but from the fact that this food amounts to several pounds daily, while the body increases in weight only a few grains, you will conclude that there is a continual waste of matter. For instance, the water evaporates, and even solid substances like metal gradually, though very slowly, dissolve when they come in contact with the air. In this way our body finds itself in a continual process of disintegration and evaporation. This even affects the bones, for it has been discovered that these, though in the center of the body, undergo a constant change, continually wasting away, and by this means of nourishment are formed into new ones. Yea, our entire body is made new about every seven years, so that not the least particle of the former remains. A man of forty-two years, therefore, would have changed his body completely six times; and yet how remarkable! His form remains, his appearance in the main is the same, and in the midst of the changeable, there remains a mysterious unity and unchangeableness. Does this not point to a secret divine power, which lies here at the bottom? Yes, behold, the human soul, *your* soul, has received the power from God to draw to itself by day and by night, whether you sleep or wake, constantly innumerable little

parts of matter in order that it may build and maintain for itself a body, by means of which it comes in constant contact with the world outside. And not only so, but it has also power to create for itself to a certain degree a picture of its own making. Have you ever, after a certain interval of time, again seen a man who, during that time had given himself up to a life of vice, fallen away from God and gone to ruin? And have you not noticed in his body, in his face, that he is on the down-grade, though he should be dressed ever so handsomely, washed and combed? And, on the other hand, have you ever seen the face of a man expressing a benevolent disposition, divine peace, though he did not say a word? Thus, as God created man after His own image, the immortal soul shines always more or less through this transient and mortal body. This soul is still a much greater wonder than the body of man, and about it we will now speak.

The Human Spirit

God Created Man After His Image

THE full meaning of this word we shall doubtless not know, until we come into the bodies of our resurrection, glorious like the sun and strong with heavenly power. But what dignity, what honor, that God himself—Jehovah—should reveal himself in human form, and also that He has made the angels in our likeness! This we are not to understand as if we could judge by the form of man how God looks, but we are to understand here the essential powers and attributes of the human soul, as well as the position of man toward the rest of creation. As God rules the entire universe, so man is to rule, through God, the earth and all creatures, and this he does in a certain sense even after his fall. Of course, the creatures he rules in the love of God for the sake of their happiness are no longer his subjects in filial obedience, but rather they fear him, according to the Word of God to Noah: “And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth” (Gen. 9:2); and instead of being their God, he is, alas! too often their *devil*. He has still great power nevertheless. There is not a being on earth, who could call him to account saying: Why are you doing this? Plants

and animals are given over into his hands. He can take up a plant at one place and let it grow at another; and if this appears to us a matter of little importance, because we are used to it, let us remember that no animal can do it. Likewise, he not only can kill an animal, but can bring it up tame and improve it. And were he to take care of the animate world as becomes a king, instead of considering them his slaves which he may torment at his pleasure, he could now already on his part satisfy many an earnest expectation of the creature. Thus man is the only creature of God upon the earth who has power over the fire, this element of the wrath of God. Though many performances of animals, for instance, the building of houses by the beaver, seem to require more sense than when man, in the primitive ages, attempted to preserve the fire of a tree when struck by lightning in adding more wood, yet no animal, not even the monkey, would have conceived such an idea.

But still more than in his control over nature we have to look for the *essential powers* of the human mind, wherein his "God-likeness" appears. What else are human art and science, the waging of wars and founding of kingdoms, the building of cities and making of laws, than a continual revelation and manifestation of an immortal, divine soul, which can find no peace till it rests in the eternal, infinite God himself? Why is it not satisfied and content like the ox with a filled manger? The reason is: it is God's image.

A part of this "God-likeness" is our *conscience*. As nothing evil can stand before God, so also nothing can stand before the divine in man, which inexorably judges and punishes his deeds, words and thoughts. How often has it happened that a murderer after ten and twenty years has voluntarily offered himself to the courts and asked for punishment, in order that at last that fearful, unbearable judge within him may come to silence. Or look at the rich man who, by bad and dishonorable trickeries, has acquired a great fortune. Well may he possess a magnificent house and sit at a sumptuous table; well may his friends call him a rich, clever, honorable and esteemed man, which he himself is almost inclined to believe. But when his friends are gone and the lights are extinguished, he rolls about on his magnificent bed, restless and anxious, his mind occupied with new speculations, only that he may not hear that small, still voice, which in the stillness of the night incessantly whispers: "You are a thief."

Think also of your memory. What a power over time and space does it not possess, a part as it were, of God's omnipresence! Things long past, which the soul at one time has taken hold of, and now, after the floods of pain or joy have passed, after it has thought, spoken, done and experienced things innumerable, perhaps an entire life gone by, it still has the power to bring forth at its will out of the ocean of the past, this or that which has apparently vanished long ago. And the man seventy or eighty years of age again sees the

room in which he played when a little child, and hears the voice of the mother who died long ago. This is a mighty power of the human soul. From observations, which one may make of men far advanced in years, this power is much greater and more complete in sickness, in insanity and at the dying hour, than we commonly imagine. One must assume that the human soul really forgets nothing, but that this or that experience is only for a time, as it were, covered up, and that there will be a time when every experience, every deed and every word, yea, every thought out of the depths, will come to life again, living, true and perfect, in order that the soul might be judged thereby.

And now the greatest wonder of man—speech! The animals, too, have a kind of language, and are able, by means of the voice, to express joy and pain in an impressive manner; but they have not the power of speech. Never has the most intelligent dog invented a single monosyllabic word with which to call his master. And why not? Because he has not a mind that understands and grasps men and things as to their real nature. But as we read that at the time of the creation, “God said,” “He called,” so Adam, too, “gave names to all cattle” as a beginning of his work on earth. This means a great deal. Have you never thought about this wonderful capacity of the human soul to give expression by means of speech to its inward being, yea, so to speak, to breathe itself forth? With your lips and tongue

you put a portion of the air into vibration: the sound-waves are caught up by the ear of your neighbor, and immediately he knows your deepest thoughts! With this apparently insignificant act, with this little air put into motion, you can accomplish that which is good or bad. By means of speech we create anger, give comfort, lead immortal souls either to God or to Satan. By means of speech kingdoms are daily founded and destroyed, cities are built, states and laws established, art and science fostered. And how exceedingly simple are the means by which such great things are accomplished! Five vowels and about twenty consonants have been sufficient for the last six thousand years for the most civilized nations of the earth, and will be sufficient for them as long as the earth stands, to express everything that the human heart thinks, feels, meditates and discovers. In these twenty-five signs are hidden all the books and writings that ever have been made, all languages and dialects, which mankind ever has spoken or will yet speak. Man can invent many things, but he can invent no new letter, no sixth vowel to the five already existing, which God has given him. Is this not wonderful? And have we not in this a presentiment of the fact that the eternal Son of God is called in the Scriptures "The Word of God"? But if you wish to understand something of the power which is contained in a *human word*, remember only the sentence: "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matth.

12:37). Recall what said Noah: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (Gen. 9:25), and with this saying the prophetic man of God sealed the destiny of an entire continent for thousands of years to come, for history proves it: Africa always has been and still is the land of slavery. And when Isaac had blessed Jacob, no prayers and no tears could alter what had been said. The word was spoken and Jacob remained blessed. How great is the power of the word spoken in the name of God! Therefore it is a lamentable sign of our times that speech among us has become so degenerate. The old Greeks and Romans laid much stress on the proper use of language. Socrates said: "To speak incorrectly is damaging to the soul," or, "Speak in order that I may see you." Therefore it was considered the main object of an education to teach men how to speak in a few words precisely and truthfully. At the present day what a flood of meaningless, hollow and empty words are constantly poured forth into the world, spoken and written, so that it is said depreciatingly: "They are but words!" This is much to be regretted.

Thanks be to God that the Word of God has more power, validity and permanency than such empty human speech, and that even Satan is not allowed to interfere. The Word of God is eternal and cannot pass away. Having once said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let him have dominion over the whole earth," the complete fulfillment of this word may be inter-

rupted by sin, but not annulled. Redeemed through Jesus Christ and renewed in the image of God, man will sometime rule over the whole earth, yea, will even judge the angels (1 Cor. 6:31), and his word will again have a creative and judicial power. But as its highest and noblest aim, the word of man, as completed in Christ, will consist in this, that, by means of the same, he will give praise and honor and glory to God in all eternity; for He created all things, and for His pleasure they are and were made (Rev. 4:11). "And I saw heaven new and earth new; for the first heaven and the first earth are gone" (Rev. 21:1). These words of creation, which we have considered hitherto, are immortal; the light and the air, the mountain, the plant and the animal, these are eternal thoughts of a God who will never give up His work as a failure. Upon the new earth we will be allowed to behold this new creation in still greater splendor and glory, and inherit all things (Rev. 21:5).

It is, indeed, a great pity that even many Christians are so slow to believe the promise of God to create a new heaven and a new earth. That birds and trees, hills and rivers are here no one would undertake to deny. But that the same God, who once created them, will make a new earth on which there will be rivers of crystal and hills of light, trees of life and a city of wondrous glory, in which we shall live in our risen, immortal, glorified and incorruptible bodies, clothed in white, with hands to feel and feet to walk, and

a mouth to eat and drink, sing and praise—this many will not believe; and in spite of the bodily resurrection of Christ and the promises of the Word, they regard heaven as a hazy, indefinite and undefined state of existence somewhere, without any clear idea as to its locality. That this present world should have created itself is a piece of incomprehensible nonsense. But if God created it, why can He not re-create it? Is His hand shortened? Can the Creator no longer create? Or shall the world of heavenly bliss, in which dwells no evil thing at all, be less real and substantial than this present world which is so full of sin? O, fools and slow of heart to believe all that God has promised in His Word!

There is also a wonderful correspondence between the last page of the Bible and the first. Thus the Word proves itself to be one throughout, a glorious revelation of the counsels of God with respect to mankind. "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." At the end he will create a new heaven and a new earth. The first earth He watered with four rivers; on the new earth a river of crystal will flow from the temple. In the first Paradise there was a tree of life; in the second there will be trees of life. On the first earth there were mountains; on the second the Lord's house shall rise on a mountain, great and exceeding high.

But glorious also will be the differences between the first creation and the second. Sun and moon lit the first, and in Paradise itself day alter-

nated with night. But on the new earth there will be no night; they will need neither light of lamp nor light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light (Rev. 22:5). Adam and Eve were naked, in token of their innocence; on the new earth the saints will walk, clothed in white, in token of their righteousness. In the first Paradise man dwelt in a garden; in the second his home will be in the glorious palaces of God. In the first he was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; in the second there is no prohibition, for no tree of the kind grows there. In the first there was a "No"; in the second it will all be "YEA and AMEN." "And death shall be no more; neither shall there be murmuring, nor crying, nor pain any more; the first things are passed away. And he that sitteth on the throne said: Behold, I make all things new."

May God, through the blood of Christ, fit us for the inheritance of the saints in light! Amen.



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